

One of the remarkable aspects of art is that it has influences on many things. It is often influenced by earlier elements and creates legacies that influence future artistic expression. Toulouse-Lautrec is an example of a remarkable artist with noted links to his artistic past as well as later artistic works. As a significant artist of his time, famous for his tremendous contribution to the art world, Lautrec's successes can be linked to earlier works. As well, and despite some differences from other noted artists of his time, Lautrec's artistic spirit lives on, to some extent, in the work of later artists.

Despite his physical disability as well as fragile health, Toulouse-Lautrec produced numerous amazing works of art. He managed to create his own recognizable style, showed an impressive sense of humour in his works and used technology to reach a larger public. During his brief life, Toulouse-Lautrec often enjoyed making quick sketches of people, while talking and drinking in nightclubs. As seen in "At the Moulin Rouge", this painting clearly exhibits his interest in Parisian nightlife of the 19th century. Here, he illustrated people in a humorous way. In addition to his interest in Parisian nightlife, he was also the first artist to produce posters for commercial purposes. One of his posters, "Moulin Rouge (poster)," was an advertisement inviting the public to a show. Showing his humorous illustrations and interesting slogans, such as "a very Parisian show which husbands can attend with their wives," Lautrec built up his reputation and became well known in Paris. In fact, he created copies of his posters using a technique, called lithography. It involves drawing or painting onto a stone with special inks, then pressing. Since a lithograph costs

much less than an original painting, this method certainly allowed people to buy more of his lithographs.

Having reviewed the elements of Lautrec's work, it would be worthwhile to understand what influenced his style. Perhaps the most essential influence on Lautrec's style was the work of Edgar Degas. Degas was an impressionist artist, living between 1834 and 1917. The most notable influence on Lautrec from Degas relates to subject matter. Both Degas's and Lautrec's works show a fascination with people on stage. Evidently, "The Stars of the Quadrille" by Lautrec reminds one of "The Rehearsal on the Stage" by Degas. Both paintings contain similar subject matter, the dancers. Degas was interested in depicting a daily routine of practice and work, in his case, the ballet. Inspired by Degas' work, Lautrec portrayed dancers and circus people in his paintings, such as his dancer-friend Jane Avril. In addition to common subject matter, Lautrec was influenced by Degas' use of light. In "At the Moulin Rouge", one can observe Lautrec's use of 'footlights' (the impression of light coming from the bottom of the picture), which was similarly employed in "Singer with a Glove" by Degas. Lastly, Degas had an effect on Lautrec in terms of the structural composition of his works. This influence is evident in "the strong diagonals and symmetrical composition" of the paintings. A strong diagonal made on the bottom-left of "At the Moulin-Rouge" by Lautrec, is very similar to the diagonals made by table edges in "The Absinthe Drinker" by Degas.

With an understanding of influences on Lautrec's style, it would be interesting to see Lautrec's work within the context of one of his contemporaries. Another significant impressionist of Lautrec's time was Van Gogh. Although they lived in the same period, Toulouse-Lautrec and Van Gogh reveal an entirely different style in their artwork. First, the subject matters each artist paints are different. It becomes obvious when one looks at "At the Moulin-Rouge" by Lautrec and "The Starry Night" by Van Gogh; Van Gogh liked to paint portraits and landscapes, whereas Lautrec preferred to portray the Parisian nightlife of the period. The next thing that distinguishes Lautrec's work from Van Gogh's relates to their different use of brushstrokes. Looking at Lautrec's "Jane Avril (poster)" and Van Gogh's "The Starry Night," Lautrec's use of long, strong, and black lines differs greatly from Van Gogh's short and choppy brushstrokes. A possible reason for this is that, unlike Lautrec's bold brush style, which creates a sense of fluidity, Van Gogh's use of short and choppy brushstrokes creates a sense of movement and a feeling of aliveness.

Though an understanding of Lautrec's influences and works is important, perhaps the greatest value of an artist can be seen in how he/she influences future generations. In Lautrec's case, the elements of his style are most clearly illustrated in the work of Picasso. The first obvious influence that Lautrec had on Picasso would be the long, strong and black outline. In the Picasso's painting, "Self-Portrait", the use of "strong, black line and flat areas of lighter colour" reminds one of the outlines that were similarly employed in most of Lautrec's posters, such as "Moulin Rouge (poster)." Another factor suggesting the influence of Lautrec on Picasso is Picasso's great use of lithography. Lithography was

initially used by Lautrec, a painter that Picasso admired. As discussed earlier, lithographic prints were cheaper than originals. So, people who would never be able to afford his original painting were able to buy his lithographs. Therefore, just like Lautrec, Picasso's work could reach a wide market and achieve greater fame than any other artist. Besides his use of lithography and strong, black outlines, Picasso even designed a cover for a menu, "evoking the touch of Toulouse-Lautrec."

Reviewing the work of Toulouse-Lautrec is a worthwhile and pleasant experience. It leads one to an understanding of his work on its own and in comparison to those who influenced him and those he influenced. It has become clear that Toulouse-Lautrec produced incredible work with a unique style. Furthermore, it was shown that Edgar Degas significantly influenced Toulouse-Lautrec's style. Finally and as proof of Lautrec's greatness, it was learned that Picasso, in many ways, followed the style of Lautrec.